

Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board Patient Care Alert  
-Hurricane Katrina Emergency Dispensing Policy-

**Emergency Dispensing Policy-**

- 1. Applies to non controlled substances prescription drugs.**
- 2. Applies to controlled substances prescription drugs. (The DEA as agreed to this policy for controlled substances.)**
- 3. A pharmacist may dispense from information contained on a prescription label, to the extent reasonably necessary to meet patient need, and where in the judgment of the pharmacist the label represents a valid prescription order .**
- 4. Affected States- patients relocating from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama or Florida.**
- 5. This policy is to remain in effect until further notice from the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board.**

In response to the severe damage caused by Hurricane Katrina questions have been asked regarding what emergency dispensing protocols are appropriate to insure the continuation of patient care for persons relocating to Wisconsin from the Gulf States affected by Hurricane Katrina. As in past emergencies, the Board's position is that the need to continue patient care for the benefit of the patient's health, safety and welfare is of paramount importance where the usual and customary dispensing process has been disrupted by events beyond the patient's control.

Persons affected who are relocating from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama or Florida, may be presenting to Wisconsin pharmacies for refills of prescription orders. It is possible that the only evidence of a valid prescription order in the patient's possession will likely be a prescription bottle with a label and nothing more.

The patient's doctor's office and pharmacy may be destroyed or damaged, and/or records or communications otherwise are unavailable at the current time. A transfer of prescription order information may not be possible.

The Board has taken the position in the past that dispensing in circumstances similar to these is permissible, in order to meet patient need. The pharmacist is always under a duty to be observant for situations of improper drug seeking or diversion, however, where no indications exist to reasonably question prescription order validity, the pharmacist should work with the patient to continue care to the extent required until a patient may reasonably access records or establish continuing practitioner care in this state.

Each patient must be viewed on a case by case basis by the pharmacist to determine how best to meet patient need. Therefore, dispensing from a prescription drug label may be done for a limited and reasonable time. (The affected states are limited to patients from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida)

The United States Drug Enforcement Agency has reaffirmed its agreement to this policy for controlled substances dispensing. At the direction of the Chair of the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board, this policy will be placed on the Board's agenda for its next meeting to be held on September 7, 2005, for further review in light of ongoing developments.